A DIRECTORY OF Church-government.

Anciently contended for, and as farre as the Times would suffer, practiſed by the firſt Non-conformiſts in the daies of Queen ELIZABETH.

Found in the ſtudy of the moſt accompliſhed Divine, Mr. *Thomas Cartwright*, after his deceaſe; and reſerved to be publiſhed for ſuch a time as this.

Publiſhed by Authority.

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THE SACRED DISCIPLINE of the CHURCH, described in the Word of God.

THe Discipline of Christs Church that is necessary for all times is delivered by Christ, and set downe in the holy Scriptures. Therefore the true and lawfull Discipline is to be fetched from thence, and from thence alone. And that which resteth upon any other foundation ought to be esteemed unlawfull and counterfeit.

Of all particular Churches there is one and the same right order and forme: Therefore also no one may challenge to it selfe any power over others; nor any right which doth not alike agree to others.

The Ministers of publique charges in every particular Church ought to be called and appointed to their charges by a lawfull Ecclesiasticall calling, such as hereafter is set downe.

All these for the divers regard of their severall kinds are of equall power amongst themselves.

No man can be lawfully called to publique charge in any Church, but he that is fit to discharge the same. And none is

to be accounted fit, but he that is endued with the common gifts of all the godly; that is, with faith, and a blamelesse life: And further also, with those that are proper to that Ministery wherein he is to be used, and necessary for the executing of the same; whereupon for triall of those gifts some convenient way and examination is to be used.

The party to be called must first be elected, then he is to be ordained to that charge whereunto he is chosen, by the prayers of that Church whereunto he is to be admitted; the mutuall duties of him and of the Church being before laid open.

The Ministers of the Church are, first they that are Ministers of the Word. In their examination it is specially to be taken heed unto, that they be apt to teach, and tryed men, not utterly unlearned, nor newly planted and converted to the Faith.

Now these Ministers of the Word are, first Pastors, which doe administer the Word and Sacraments, then Teachers, which are occupied in wholsome doctrine.

Besides there are also Elders, which watch over the life and behaviour of every man, and Deacons, which have care over the poore.

Further, in every particular Church there ought to be a Presbytery, which is a Consistory, and as it were a Senate of Elders. Under the name of Elders here are contained they who in the Church minister doctrine, and they who are properly called Elders.

By the common Counsell of the Eldership all things are directed that belong to the state of their Church. First, such as belong to the guidance of the whole body of it in the holy and common assembly gathered together in the name of the Lord, that all things may be done in them duely, orderly, and to edification. 2. Then also such as pertaine to particular persons. First, to all the members of that Church, that the

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good may enioy all the priviledges that belong unto them, that the wicked may be corrected with Ecclesiasticall censures according to the quality of the fault, private and publique, by admonishing & by removing either from the Lords Supper by suspension (as it is commonly called) or out of the Church by Excommunication. The which belong specially to the Ministers of publique charge in the Church to their calling either to be begun or ended, and ended either by relieving or punishing them, and that for a time by suspension or altogether by deposition.

For directing of the Eldership let the Pastors be set over it, or if there be no Pastors then one in the same Church, let the Pastors doe it in their turnes.

But yet in all the greater affaires of the Church, as in Excommunicating of any, and in chooSing and deposing of Church Ministers, nothing may be concluded without the knowledge and consent of the Church.

Particular Churches ought to yeeld mutuall help one to another, for which cause they are to communicate amongst themselves.

The end of this communicating together is, that all things in them may be so directed both in regard of Doctrine and also of Discipline, as by the Word of God they ought to bee.

Therfore the things that belong hereunto are determined by the common opinion of those who meet so to communicate together, and whatsoever is to be amended furthered or procured in any of those severall Churches that belong to that assembly. wherein, albeit no particular Church hath power over another, yet every particular Church of the same resort, meeting and counsell, ought to obey the opinion of more Churches with whom they communicate.

For holding of these meetings and assemblies there are to

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be chosen by every Church belonging to that assembly, principall men from among the Elders, who are to have their instructions from them, and so to bee sent to the Assembly. There must be also a care had, that the things they shall returne to have been godly agréed on by the méetings, be diligently observed by the Churches.

Further in such assemblies there is also to be chosen one that may be set over the assemblies who may moderate and direct them. His duty is to see, that the assemblies be held godly, quiet and comely. Therefore it belongeth unto him to begin and end the conference with prayer, to know every mans instructions, to propound in order the things that are to bee handled, to gather their opinions, and to propound what is the opinion of the greater part. It is also the part of the rest of the assembly to speak their opinions of the things propounded godly and quietly.

The Synodicall Discipline gathered out of the Synods and use of the Churches which have restored it according to the Word of God, and out of sundry bookes that are written of the same, and referred unto certain Heads.

Of the necessity of a Calling.

LEt no man thrust himselfe into the executing of any part of publique charge in the administration of the Word, Sacraments, Discipline or care over the poore. Neither let any such sue or seek for any publque charge of the Church, but let every one tarry untill hee bee lawfully called.

The manner of entring and determining of a Calling and against a Miniſtery of no certaine place; and the deſertion of a Church.

LEt none be called but unto ſome certain charge ordained of God, and to the exerciſing of the ſame in ſome particular Congregation. And he that is ſo called let him be ſo bound to that----Church that he may not after be of any other, or depart from it without the conſent thereof. Let none be called, but they that have firſt ſubſcribed the confeſſion of Doctrine and Diſcipline. Whereof let them be admoniſhed to have copies with themſelves.

In the examination of Miniſters the teſtimony of the place from whence they come is to be demanded, whereby it may bee underſtood what life and converſation hee hath been of, and whether he hath been addicted to any Hereſie, or to the reading of any hereticall books, or to curious and ſtrange queſtions and idle ſpeculations; or rather whether hee be accompted ſound and conſenting in all things to the Doctrine received in the Church. Whereunto if hee agree, hee is alſo to expound ſome part of the holy Scriptures twice or oftner, as it ſhall ſeem meet to the examiners, and that before the Conference, and that Church which is intereſſed. Let him alſo be demanded of the principall heads of Divinity. And whether he will diligently execute and diſcharge his Miniſtery, and in the execution thereof propound unto himſelfe not his owne deſires and commodities, but the glory of God and edification of the Church. Laſtly, whether hee will be ſtudious and carefull to maintaine and preſerve wholeſome Doctrine, and Eccleſiaſticall Diſcipline. Thus let the Miniſter be examined not onely by one Elderſhip, but alſo by ſome greater meeting and aſſembly.

Before

Of Election.

BEfore the Election of a Miniſter and the deliberation of the Conference concerning the ſame, let there be a day of Faſt kept in the Church intereſſed.

Of the place of exerciſing this Calling.

ALbeit it be lawfull for a Miniſter upon juſt occaſion to Preach in another Church then that wherof he is Miniſter, yet none may exerciſe any ordinary Miniſtery elſewhere, but for a certaine time upon great occaſion, and by the conſent of his Church and Conference.

Of the Office of the Miniſters of the word, and firſt of the order of Liturgy, or Common Prayer.

LEt the Miniſter that is to Preach name a Pſalme or a part of a Pſalm (beginning with the firſt, and ſo proceeding) that may be ſung by the Church, noting to them the end of their ſinging (to wit) the glory of God and their own edification. After the Pſalme let a ſhort admonition to the people follow of preparing themſelves to pray duly unto God. Then let there be made a Prayer containing a generall confeſſion. Firſt of the guilt of ſin both originall and actuall, and of the puniſhment which is due by the Law for them both. Then alſo of the promiſe of the Goſpell, and in reſpect of it ſupplication of pardon for the ſaid guilt and puniſhment, and petition of grace promiſed, as for the duties of the whole life, ſo eſpecially for the godly expounding and receiving of the Word. Let this petition be concluded with the Lords Prayer. After the Sermon, let Prayer be made againe, Firſt for grace to profit by the doctrine delivered, the principall heads thereof being remembred; then for all men, but chiefly for the univerſall Church and for all eſtates and degrees of the people; which is likewiſe to be ended with the Lords Prayer and the ſinging of a Pſalme as before. Laſt of all let the Congregation

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be dismissed, with some convenient forme of blessing taken out of the Scripture, such as is *Num.6.24.2 Cor.13.13.*

Of Preaching.

LEt him that shall Preach choose some part of the Canonicall Scripture to expound, and not of the *Apocrypha.* Further in his ordinary Ministery, let him not take Postills (as they are called) but some whole booke of the holy Scripture, especially of the new Testament, to expound in order. In choise whereof regard is to be had both of the Ministers ability, and of the edification of the Church.

He that Preacheth must performe two things, the first that his speech bee uncorrupt, which is to be considered both in regard of the Doctrine, that it be holy, sound, wholsome and profitable to edification, not divelish, hereticall, leavened, corrupt, fabulous, curious, or contentious; and also in respect of the manner of it, that it be proper to the place which is handled, that is, which either is contained plainly in the very words; or if it be gathered by consequent, that the same be fit and cleere and such as may rise upon the property of the word, grace of speech and suit of the matter, and not be allegoricall, strange, wrested or far fetched. Now let that which is such, and chiefly which is fittest for the times and occasions of the Church, be delivered. Further let the explication, confirmation, enlargement and application, and the whole Treatise and handling of it be in the vulgar tongue, and let the whole confirmation and proofe be made by arguments, testimonies and examples taken only out of the holy Scriptures, applied fitly and according to the naturall meaning of the places that are alleadged.

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ſtile, phraſe and manner of ſpeech, that it be ſpirituall, pure, proper, ſimple and applied to the capacity of the people, not ſuch as humane wiſdome teacheth, nor ſavoring of new fangledneſſe, nor either ſo affectate as it may ſerve for pompe and oſtentation, or ſo careleſſe, and baſe, as becommeth not Miniſters of the Word of God. Secondly, it is alſo to be regarded aſwell in ordering the voyce, in which a care muſt be had that (avoyding the keeping alwayes of one tune) it may be equall, and both riſe and fall by degrees; as alſo in ordering the geſture wherein (the body being upright) the guiding and ordering the whole body is to follow the voyce, there being avoyded in it all unſeemely geſtures of the head or other parts and often turning of the body to divers ſides. Finally let the geſture be grave, modeſt and ſeemly, not utterly none, nor too much neither like the geſtures of Playes or Fencers.

Theſe things are to be performed by him that Preacheth, whereby when need requireth they may be examined who are trayned and exerciſed to be made fit to Preach: Let there be, if it may be, every Sabbath day two Sermons, and let them that preach alwayes endeavour to keepe themſelves within one houre, eſpecially on the weekdayes. The uſe of preaching at Burialls is to be left as it may bee done conveniently, becauſe there is danger that they may nouriſh the ſuperſtition of ſome, or bee abuſed to pompe and vanity.

Of the Catechiſme.

LEt the Catechiſme bee taught in every Church. Let there be two ſorts. One more large applied to the delivering of the ſum of Religion by a ſute and order of certaine places of the Scriptures, according to which ſome point of the holy Doctrine may be expounded every week. Another of the ſame ſort but ſhorter, fit for the examinati-

on of the rude and ignorant before they be admitted to the Lords Supper.

Of the other parts of Liturgy or Divine Service.

ALL the reſt of the Liturgy or Divine Service conſiſteth in the adminiſtration of the Sacraments and by the cuſtome of the Church in the bleſſing of Marriage. The moſt commodious forme thereof is that which is uſed by the Churches that have reformed their ——Diſcipline according to the Word of God.

Of Sacraments.

LEt onely a Miniſter of the Word that is a Preacher miniſter the Sacraments, and that after the preaching of the Word, and not in any other place then in the publique aſſemblies of the Church.

Of Baptiſme.

WOmen only may not offer unto Baptiſme thoſe that are to be baptized, but the Father if it may be, or in his name ſome other. They which preſent unto Baptiſme ought to be perſwaded not to give thoſe that are Baptized the names of God or of Chriſt, or of Angells or of holy Offices, as of Baptiſt, Evangeliſt, &c. nor ſuch as ſavour of Paganiſme or Popery; but chiefly ſuch whereof there are examples in the holy Scriptures in the names of thoſe who are reported in them to have beene godly and vertuous.

Of the Communion.

LEt the time of celebrating the Communion bee made known eight dayes before, that the Congregation may prepare themſelves, and that the Elders may do their duty in going to and viſiting whom they ought.

Of Signifying their names that are to communicate.

LEt them which before have not beene received to the Lords Table when they firſt deſire to come to it; give their names to the Miniſter ſeaven dayes before the Com-

munion that care of enquiring of them may be committed to the Elders, that if there be any cauſe of hindrance there may be ſtay made betime; but if there be no ſuch thing let them proceed (where neede may be) to the examining of their faith before ſome of the Elders and Miniſters every moneth before the Communion. Let this whole Treatiſe of Diſcipline be read in the conſiſtory, and let the Miniſters, Elders and Deacons be cenſured one after an other; yet ſo that the Miniſter concerning Doctrine be cenſured of Miniſters only.

Let them only be admitted to the Communion that have made confeſſion of their faith, and ſubmitted themſelves to the Diſcipline; unleſſe they ſhall bring letters teſtimoniall of good credit from ſome other place, or ſhall approve themſelves by ſome other ſufficient teſtimonie.

Children are not to be admitted to the Communion before they be of the age of 14 yeares except the conſiſtory ſhall otherwiſe determine.

On the Sabbath-day next before the Communion, let mention be made in the Sermon of the examination, whereunto the Apoſtle exhorteth, and of the peace that is by faith, in the day of the Communion, let there be ſpeech of the Doctrine of the Sacraments, and eſpecially of the Lords Supper.

Of Faſting.

LEt the day of Faſting bee publiſhed by the Paſtor according to the adviſe of the conſiſtory, either for ſupplication, for turning away of calamities preſent or threatned; or for petition of ſome ſpeciall grace. Let the Sermons upon the ſame day before and after noone (as on the Lords day) bee ſuch as may bee fit for the preſent occaſion.

Of Holidaies.

HOlidaies are conveniently to be abolished.

Of Marriage.

LEt espousing goe before marriage. Let the words of espousing be of the present time, and without condition, and before sufficient witnesses on both sides. It is to be wished that the Minister or an Elder be present at the espousals, who having called upon God may admonish both parties of their duties. First, may have care of avoyding the degrees forbidden both by the Law of God and man: and then they may demand of them, whether they be free from any bond of Marriage, which if they professe and be strangers, he may also require sufficient testimony. Further also they are to be demanded, whether they have been married before, and of the death of the party with whom they were married, which if they acknowledge and be strangers he may demand convenient testimony of the death of the other party. Finally, let them be asked if they be under the government of any; whether they whom it concerneth have consented.

The Espousals being done in due order, let them not be dissolved, though both parties should consent. Let the marriage be solemnized within two moneths after. Before the marriage let the promise be published three severall Sabbath daies; but first, let the parties espoused, with their parents or governours desire the publishing thereof of the Minister and two Elders at the least, that they may be demanded of those things that are needfull, and let them require to see the instrument of the covenant of the Marriage, or at least sufficient testimony of the Espousals. Marriage may be solemnized and blessed upon any ordinary day of publique prayer, saving upon a day of Fast.

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Of Schooles.

LEt children be instructed in Schooles; both in other learning, and especially in the Catechisme; that they may repeat it by heart, and understand it: when they are so instructed, let them be brought to the Lords Supper, after they have been examined by the Minister, and allowed by him.

Of Students of Divinity, and their Exercises.

IN every Church where it may conveniently be done, care is to be had that some poore Schollers studious of Divinity being fit for Theologicall exercises, and especially for expounding of holy Scripture, may by the liberality of the godly rich be taught and trained up to preach.

Let that exposition as often as it shall be convenient to be had be in the presence at least of one Minister, by whose presence they may be kept in order, and in the same sort, (as touching the manner of preaching) that publique Sermons are made. Which being ended, let the other students (he being put apart that was Speaker) note wherein he hath failed in any of those things that are to be performed by him that preacheth publiquely, as is set down before. Of whose opinion let the Minister that is present and is moderator of their exercise, judge and admonish the speaker, as he shall thinke meet.

Of Elders.

LEt the Elders know every particular house and person of the Church, that they may enforme the Minister of the condition of every one, and the Deacons of the sicke, and poore, that they may take care to provide for them: they are not to be perpetuall, neither yet easily to be changed.

Of Consistories.

IN the Consistory the most voices are to be yeelded unto. In it onely Ecclesiasticall things are to be handled. Of them; first they are to be dealt with such as belong to the common direction of the publique assembly, in the order of Liturgy or divine Service, Sermon, Prayers, Sacraments, Mariages, and Burials. Then with such also as pertaine to the oversight of every one, and their particular deeds. Further, they are to cause such things as shall be thought meet to be registred and written in a booke. They are also to cause to be written in another booke the names of them that are baptized. with the names of their parents and sureties. Likewise of the Communicants. Further also are to be noted their names that are married, that die, and to whom Letters testimoniall are given.

Of the Censures.

NOne is to be complained of unto the Consistory unlesse first the matter being uttered with silencing the parties name, if it seem meet so to be done by the judgment of the Consistory.

In private and lesse faults the precept of Christ, *Mat.* 18. is to be kept.

Greater and publique offences are to be handled by the Consistory. Further publique offences are to be esteemed, first, such as are done openly before all, or whomsoever, the whole Church knowing of it. Secondly, such as be done in a publique place, albeit few know it. Thirdly, that are made such by pertinacy and contempt. Fourthly, that for the heinousnesse of the offence are to be punished with some grievous civill punishment.

They that are to be excommunicated being in publique charge in the Church, are to be deposed also from their charges. They also are to be discharged that are unfit for the

the Miniſtery by reaſon of their ignorance, or of ſome incurable diſeaſe, or by any other ſuch cauſe, are diſabled to performe their Miniſtery. But in the roomes of ſuch as are diſabled by meanes of ſickneſſe or age, let another be placed without the reproach of him that is diſcharged; and further, ſo as the reverence of the Miniſtery may remaine unto him, and he may be provided for liberally and in good order.

When there is queſtion concerning an heretique, complained of to the Conſiſtory, ſtreight let two or three neighboun Miniſters be called men godly and learned, and free from that ſuſpition, by whoſe opinion he may be ſuſpended till ſuch time as the Conference may take knowledge of his cauſe.

The obſtinate after admonition by the Conſiſtory, though the fault have not been ſo great, are to be ſuſpended from the Communion; and if they continue in their obſtinacy, this ſhall be the order to proceed to their Excommunication. Three ſeverall Sabbath daies after the Sermon publiquely let be declared the offence committed by the offender. The firſt Sabbath let not the offenders name be publiſhed. The ſecond let it be declared, and withall a certaine day of the weeke named, to be kept for that cauſe in faſting and prayer. The third let warning be given of his Excommunicating to follow the next Sabbath after, except there may be ſhewed ſome ſufficient cauſe to the contrary: ſo upon the fourth Sabbath day let the ſentence of Excommunication be pronounced againſt him, that his ſpirit may be ſaved in the day of the Lord.

He that hath committed great offences, opprobrious to the Church, and to be grievouſly puniſhed by the Magiſtrates authority, albeit he profeſſe his repentance in words,

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yet for the triall thereof, and to take away the offence, let him for a time be kept from the Communion. Which how often, and how long it is to be done, let the Consistory according to their discretion determine. After which, if the party repent, he is brotherly to be received againe; but not untill he have openly professed his repentance before the Church, by consent whereof he should have been Excommunicated.

If the Ministers of any publique charge of the Church commit any such thing, they are to be deposed from their charge.

Of the assemblies of the Church.

PArticular Churches are to communicate one with another by common meetings and resorts. In them onely Ecclesiasticall matters are to be handled, and of those, onely such as pertaine to the Churches of that resort; concerning other Churches, unlesse they be desired, they are to determine nothing further then to referre such matters to their next common and great meeting.

Let the Order of proceeding in them be this: First, let the survey be taken of those that are present, and the names of those that are absent, and should be there, be noted that they may give a reason at their next meeting of their absence, or be censured by the judgement of the assembly next. Let the acts of the last assembly of that kinde be read, that if any of the same remaine unfinished they may be dispatched. Then let those things be dealt in that are properly belonging to the present assembly. Where first the instructions sent from the Churches are to be delivered by every one in order, as they sit together, with their Letters of credence. Secondly, let the state of the Churches of that resort be considered, to wit, how they are instructed

and guided. Whether the holy Doctrine and Discipline be taught and exercised in them, and whether the Ministers of publique charges doe their duty, and such like. Furthermore they shall determine of those things that doe appertaine to the common state of all the Churches of that resort, or unto any of the same, which way may be sufficient for the oversight of the Churches. Lastly, if it seem meet, the Delegates present may be censured.

They that are to meet in such assemblies are to be chosen by the consent of the Churches of that assembly and conference to whom it may appertaine.

Let such onely be chosen that exercise publique function in the Church of Ministery or Eldership, and which have subscribed to the Doctrine and Discipline, and have promised to behave themselves according to the Word of God. Notwithstanding it may be lawfull also to be present for other Elders and other Ministers, and likewise (if the Assembly thinke it meet) for Deacons and for Students in Divinity, especially those that exercise themselves in expounding the holy Scriptures i the Conferences, and be asked their opinion. Which in students is to this end, that their judgements in handling matters Ecclesiasticall may be both tried and sharpned. But they onely are to give voyce which are chosen by the Churches, and have brought their instructions signed from them.

If there fall out any very waighty matter to be consulted of, let notice of it be given to the Moderator of the Assembly next going before, or to the Minister of that Church where the next meeting is to be. The same is to send word of it in due time to the Minister of every Church of that Assembly, that they may communicate it afore-hand with those to whom it appertaineth, that the Delegates resorting

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to the next meeting may understand and report their judgements.

In appointing of the place for the Assembly regard must be had of the convenient distance, and other commodities that no part may justly complaine that they are burthened above others.

In every such Ecclesiasticall Assembly it is meet there be a Moderator. Hee is to have charge of the Assembly, to see it kept in good order. Hee is alwaies, if it may be conveniently, to be changed. The choise is to be in this manner:

The Moderator of the former Assembly of that kind, or in his absence the Minister of the Church where they meet, having first prayed fitly to that purpose, is to move the Assembly to choose a Moderator. He being chosen is to provide that the things done in the Assembly may be written, that the Delegates of every Church may write them out and communicate them with the Conferences from whence they came.

The Moderator is also by the order and judgement of the Assembly, to give answer either by speech or by Letters, to such as desire any answer, and to execute censures if any be to be executed. Further, he is to procure all things to be done in it godly and quietly, exhorting to meekneſse, moderation of spirit, and forbearing one of another where need shall be, and referring it to the Assembly to take order for such as are obstinate and contentious. Lastly, he is to remember them of the next meeting following, with thankes for their paines, and exhortation to proceed cheerfully in their Callings, and so curteously to dismisse the Assembly. Before such time none may depart without leave of the Assembly.

Thoſe Aſſemblies, according to their kinds have greate authority, if they be greater; and leſſe, if they be leſſe. Therefore (unleſſe it be a plaine act, and manifeſt unto all) if any thinke himſelfe injured by the leſſe meeting, he may appeale ſtill unto a greater, till he come to a generall Councell, ſo that hee aſcend orderly from the leſſe to the next greater. But it is to be underſtood, that the ſentence of the Aſſemblies be holden firme untill it be otherwiſe judged by an Aſſembly of greater authority.

Aſſemblies or meetings are either Conferences or Synods.

CONferences are the meetings of the Elders of a few Churches, as for example, of twelve. There are to meet in a Conference choſen by the Elderſhip of every particular Church, one Miniſter, and one Elder. The Conferences are to be kept once in ſix weeks.

They are ſpecially to looke into the ſtate of the Churches of that reſort and Conference: Examining particularly theſe ſeverall points. Whether all things be done in them according to the holy Doctrine and Diſcipline of the Goſpell, (to wit) whether any queſtions be moved concerning any point of Doctrine. Whether the Eccleſiaſticall Diſcipline be duely obſerved. Whether any Miniſter be wanting in any of thoſe Churches, that a ſufficient one in due time may be procured. Whether the other Miniſters of publique charge in the Church be appointed in every Congregation. Whether care be had of Schooles, and for the poore. Finally, they are to be demanded wherein any of them needeth the advice of the Conference, for the advancement of the Goſpell amongſt them.

Before

Before the end of the meeting, if it shall be so thought good by them, let one of the Ministers assembled in Conference either chosen by voyce, or taking it by turn, Preach publiquely. Of his Speech let the rest judge among themselves (the Elders being put apart) and admonish him brotherly, if there be any cause, examining all things according to those Rules that are before declared in the Chapter, concerning the things that are to be performed by those that preach.

Of Synods.

A Synod is the meeting of chosen men of many Conferences. In them let the whole Treatise of Discipline be read. In them also (other things first being finished as was said before) let all those that are present be censured (if it may be done conveniently) and let them also have a communion in, and with the Church where they were called.

There are two sorts of Synods, the first is particular; which comprehendeth both the Provinciall and Nationall Synod. A Provinciall Synod is the meeting of the chosen Men of every Conference, within the Province. A Province containeth foure and twenty conferences.

A fit way to call a provinciall councell may be this, The care thereof (except themselves will determine of it) may be committed to the particular Eldership of some conference within the Province, which by advise of the same conference may appoint the place and time for the meeting of the Provinciall Synod.

To that Church or Eldership are to be sent the matters that seemed to the particular conferences more difficult for them

them to take order in, and ſuch as belong to the Churches of the whole Province, which is to be done diligently, and in good time, that the ſame may in due ſeaſon give notice of the place and time of the Synod, and of the matters to be debated therein, that they which ſhall be ſent may come the better prepared and judge of them according to the adviſe of the Conferences.

Two Miniſters and as many Elders are to be ſent from every Conference unto the Provinciall Synod. The ſame is to be held every halfe yeare or oftner till the Diſcipline be ſetled. It is to be held three moneths before every nationall Synod, that they may prepare and make ready thoſe things that pertaine to the Nationall. The acts of the Provinciall Synod are to be ſent unto the Nationall, by the Elderſhip of that Church in which it was holden, and every Miniſter is to be furniſhed with a Copy of them, and with the reaſons of the ſame. A Nationall Synod or convocation is a meeting of the choſen men of every Province, within the Dominion of the ſame Nation and civill government. The way to call it (unleſſe it ſhall determine otherwiſe) may be the ſame with the Provinciall, that is, by the Elderſhip of ſome particular Church, which ſhall appoint the time and place of the next Nationall Convocation; but not otherwiſe then by the adviſe of their Provinciall Synod.

Out of every Provinciall Synod there are to bee choſen three Miniſters, and as many Elders to bee ſent to the Nationall. They are to handle the things pertaining to the Churches of the whole Nation or Kingdome, as the Doctrine, Diſcipline, Ceremonies, things not decided by inferiour meetings, appeales and ſuch like. By the order of the ſame, one is to bee appointed which may

gather

gather into one booke the Notes of every particular Church.

Thus much for particular meetings, the universall followeth, which is called a generall, or œcomenicall councell, which is a meeting of the chosen men of every Nationall Synod. The acts of all such councells are to be registred and reported in a book.

The Discipline intituled the Discipline of the Church described in the Word of God, as farre as we can judge, is taken, and drawne from the most pure Fountaine of the Word of God, and containeth in it the Discipline of the Church that is necessary, essentiall and common to all ages of the Church.

The Synodicall also adjoyned as it resteth upon the same foundations is likewise necessary and perpetuall, But as farre as it is not expresly, confirmed by Authority of the holy Scripture, but is applied to the use and times of the Church as their divers states may require, according to the Analogy and generall Rules of the same Scripture, is to bee judged profitable for the Churches that receive it, but may bee changed in such things as belong not to the essence of the Discipline upon a like godly reason, as the divers estates of the Church may require.

The forme of the Subscription.

THe Brethren of the conference of N. whose names are here under written have subscribed this discipline after this manner. This Discipline wee allow as a godly Discipline, and agreeable to the Word of God, (yet so as wee may be first satisfied in the things hereunder noted) and desire the same so acknowledged by us, to be furthered by all lawfull meanes, that by publique autho-

rity

rity of the Magistrate, and of our Church it may bee established.

Which thing, if it may bee obtained of Her right Excellent Majesty, and other the Magistrates of this Kingdome, we promise that we will doe nothing against it whereby the publique peace of the Church may be troubled. In the meane time we promise to observe it so far as it may be lawfull for us so to doe, by the publique Lawes of this Kingdome, and by the Peace of our Church.

FINIS.